

Behavioral Health Advisory Council

2104 W Laburnum Ave

Richmond, VA 23227

October 21st, 2015

I. Attendance

Present: Katharine Hunter, Margaret Anne Lane, Dev Nair, Gail Taylor, Rhonda Thissen, Kathleen Levenston, David Conley, Ron Pritchard, Larry Almarode, William Hart, Jane Ellis, Robin Hairfield, Betsy Lalla, Lynn DelaMer

Absent: Sherry Confer, Catharine Harrison, Livia Jansen, Patricia Parham, William Williams, Denise Thomas-Brown, Jenny Heilborn, Anne Edgerton, Megan Hodges, Bonnie Neighbour

II. Guests

Sarah Rudden

III. Opening of Business

President Jane Ellis called the meeting to order at 10:01 am.

IV. Welcome, Introductions, Public Comment

Went around the room and made introductions. Lynn DelaMer brought attention to the recent tragic incident involving the son of former senator Houck.

V. Approval of Minutes

There was no quorum present to approve the minutes. They will be voted on at the next meeting.

VI. Agency Updates

David Conley, VACSB, talked about budget priorities for the next two years. Dev Nair, VDH, mentioned that they were not awarded the suicide prevention grant. Katharine Hunter, Office of Child and Family Service (DBHDS), mentioned a YASA planning grant; two years identifying areas of needed services for 16-25 year old population. Michael Olsen, Office of Behavioral Health Wellness (DBHDS), stated that their department exceeded 15,000 trained in Mental Health First Aid. They are halfway to the governor and former Commissioner Fergusons expectations.

VII. Financial Update

Anne Edgerton, Treasurer, was absent. The report was gone over silently.

VIII. Anti-Stigma Campaign Update

Ron Pritchard suggested the Council address the anti-stigma campaign at every meeting. For Mental Health and Substance Abuse, there have been campaigns that have come and gone since the 1960's.

IX. Discussion of Upcoming Election

There was no quorum to form a Nominating Committee. Anyone interested was asked to contact the Council President.

X. DBHDS Update

Rhonda Thissen announced that Commissioner Ferguson resigned, and Dr. Jack Barber is now serving as the Interim Commissioner. DBHDS Assistant Commissioner, Daniel Herr, spoke with the Council about the strategic direction of the Department. Rhonda also announced that the contract for Mental Health America of Virginia (MHAV) has come to the end of its five year cycle, and is time to renew; the services are being bid out. The hope is that MHAV will apply for funding. MHAV's funding was extended through December 31st. There was a discussion concerning the operation of MHAV's Consumer Empowerment and Leadership Training (CELT) program by a different entity. Rhonda stated if MHAV is not awarded the contract that CELT would cease current operation, nobody else has ever operated the CELT program in Virginia.

Rhonda also mentioned that the Department is discussing the possibility of hiring a jail liaison if they determine they have the resources for that. Individuals with serious mental illness are the target; there is a great need for competency restoration.

XI. Presentation: Part One

Larry Almarode presented about alternatives in services from his personal perspective. He told the Council how vaping helped him quit cigarettes.

XII. Presentation: Part Two

Robin Hairfield gave her presentation about how alternatives in services helped her. She shared her journey to recovery with the Council.

XIII. Adjournment

The Council adjourned at 2:20pm.